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are eight handsome vaudeville theaters on Manhattan Island, not counting the burlesque houses and the places at which moving pictures form a large part of the bill, and it is easy to estimate that, if each of these holds fifteen hundred persons at a performance, one hundred and forty-four thousand men, women, and children witness a variety bill every week in New York. This estimate does not include the "sacred concerts," which, in spite of clerical and legal opposition, continue to flourish. On the Sabbath, apparently, the young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of song and dance, and every vaudeville theater in town runs full blast that day.

However bitterly their success may be resented, it is to the newcomers, to the recruits from the "egitimate," that vaudeville owes its steady advancement. One may sympathize with the acrobat who, after a lifetime spent in acquiring proficiency in his specialty, sees the big salaries being paid to men who devoted a week to rehearsing some sketch, and couldn't turn a handspring to save their souls. The fact remains that vaudeville's claim to the consideration of intelligent people rests largely upon these tabloid comedies and dramas. The success of such clever little plays as "In 1999," "At the Telephone," "The Man from the Sea," "Circumstantial Evidence," "In Old Edam," "When Pat Was King," "The Welcher," and "The Flag Station" (which, by the way, was written by Eugene Walter, author of "The Easiest Way"), marks a step forward in the possibilities of the "two a day." It enables such men as Will Cressy, whose whole output has been of sketches, to venture upon higher ground, and it banishes more surely the mixtures of buffoonery and maudlin sentiment that formerly passed as playlets.

THE progress made in this sort of entertainment is indicated by the unequivocal success of Frank Keenan in "The Oath," an intense little tragedy, founded upon a theme used by Lope de Vega. Only ten

years ago this same Frank Keenan suffered complete lack of appreciation of his fine work in an adaptation of Poe's "The System of Dr. Tarr and Professor Feather." Many well made sketches, logically planned and skilfully written, still owe their presence in vaudeville wholly to the reputation of their stars. "The Walsingham," as Walsingham Potts used to say in Madison Morton's farce of "A Regular Fix," "is a sort of guava jelly in which you swallow the bitter pill, Potts." Other one-act dramas of great merit fail altogether.

London successes like "The Monkey's Paw," and Paris successes like "The Submarine" and "After the Opera," have ended miserably in New York. Such authors as Clyde Fitch have seen their work retired after a fortnight's trial. Two tabloid pieces, "Dope" and "By-Products," from the pen of Joseph Medill Patterson, author of "The Fourth Estate," after scoring triumphs of esteem in Chicago, have not been given bookings in the East. It is not yet true that any three one-act plays in vaudeville, if given continuity and put together, would make a passable three-act play; but there are optimists among us who feel that that time will come. We believe that, without being less entertaining, less diversified, or less easily enjoyed, vaudeville will come to be made up of fewer "Jewish" or "Irish" comedians, fewer "sister acts," fewer trained seals, and a greater number of people who have something really clever to offer in song or speech or impersonation.

The place of the tabloid drama is secure, since it bears the same relation to the ordinary drama that the short story does to the novel. One day we shall have a Théâtre Antoine or a Théâtre des Capucines in New York. The popularity of the short play, with all its opportunities for skilful construction and good acting, will follow as the night the day. The nudities and lewdities of last year and this are but a passing phase. Whatever vaudeville was in the past, or is in the present, it offers endless promise for the future.

## AH LEE BUNG'S VACATION

Continued from page 6

son of leisure as he opened the bundle and reviewed its assorted provisions. "Carryin' 'is own grub when he might be panhandlin' it off the rubes!"

"Wha' fo' you no talker Melican language?" asked Bung with freezing scorn.

"Some likes one way, some another," said the wanderer. "You don't talk like the president o' Harvard yerself."

"Aw, I sabe you—you hobo!" sniffed Bung.

"Y' git me the very first time," agreed the tramp.

"What's your moniker?"

"Wha's you call him?"

"Wha's yer heathen name?"

"Ah Lee Bung."

"Mine's Mike the Pig," announced the hobo.

"Golly—you catchee heap funny name!"

laughed Bung, heartily enjoying the comedy of Mike the Pig.

"Glad y' like it," growled Mike, pawing over Bung's provisions with an appraising hand.

When he came to the package of tobacco he opened it and rolled himself a huge cigarette.

He laid out the four potatoes and peeked into the can of raw rice. The punk sticks and prayer papers he cast aside as matters of small account.

One small parcel, wrapped in a slip of newspaper, he opened with some curiosity.

When he saw what it contained he looked up pityingly.

"Soap!" he exclaimed. He raised the parcel and cast it among the bushes far down the ravine.

"Wha' fo' you thlow my soap?" howled Bung indignantly.

"Y' can't eat it, can ye?" inquired Mike the Pig, continuing to root among the provisions.

"Rice an' spuds is good's far as they go," he went on. "Wit' what I frisked, I guess we can stew up a pretty big slumgullion."

Ah Lee Bung squatted against a post and showed no sign of interest. His face was perfectly inexpressive; yet his brain was busy with all sorts of schemes for saving his provisions and escaping from this savage interloper whose companionship charmed him not.

Mike the Pig was now gathering twigs and charred sticks along the course. Bung raised himself stealthily to his knees and

slyly reached for his can of rice; but Mike turned suddenly and caught him in the act, darting a glance so terrifying that Bung settled back all in a heap.

At last the hobo started a crackling fire between two stones and set a can of water heating over the flame.

"Cook?" he inquired of Bung, turning suddenly upon him.

"I cookee fo' white man!" said Bung stolidly. "I no cookee fo' you!"

"What d'ye call me but a white man?" asked Mike the Pig, suddenly drawing closer and showing his teeth.

"You hobo," replied Bung with simple directness.

Mike the Pig laid an enormous hand on Bung's stumpy pigtail and fairly lifted him to his feet.

"You cook—see? You peel them spuds and skin that hen and cook me up a hot dish o' slum as soon as yer heathen gods'll let ye!"

"I cook!" said Bung, sullenly rising and proceeding to pluck the fowl. "Wha' you catch um chicken?" he asked abruptly as the hen was being pulled limb from limb, preparatory to being converted into stew.

"Frisked 'im from a coop," said the tramp curtly.

"Frisked—you mean you stealee him?" asked Bung in horror.

"That's the Sunday school word for it, I guess," snorted the tramp. "Any bo dat wouldn't frisk a chick'd croak in two weeks in a stingy man's valley like dis."

Bung nervously dropped a tender breast and two drumsticks into the seething water.

He had heard the Judge and many neighbors talk of acts of lawlessness up and down the valley for the last several weeks. He now had perfect evidence that the mysterious criminal was Mike the Pig, the same who now sat on the bank and directed Bung's labors with the pampered air of a landed proprietor.

"Chuck in some carrots now, Chino!" commanded Mike from his easy throne.

"Wha' fo' you no do?" protested Bung.

"Ah, no! Nix on de hard graft when I got a Chinese cook workin' for me. Dis is de softest t'ing I've had yet since I beat it from Omaha in a side-door Pullman."

The ravine was soon savory with the scent of a dishonest supper. While the mess cooked, the white man, never too lazy to boss, kept the Chinaman busy gathering fuel, poking the embers, and stirring the stew with a sharp stick.

Bung's rage increased as he labored. He had left the Oliver ranch intent upon feasting his soul with idleness, and here he was a few feet

away from the gate breaking his back in the service of a despised hobo!

"Not 'in' to do but pound me ear while de oder guy cooks me peck!" mused the irritating Mike, speaking out loud. He puffed one of Bung's cigarettes while he mused.

"I no workee fo' you plenty long," said Bung peevishly, bending over the fire. "When I eat um chickee I go."

"Everyt'ing comes to de guy what waits for de handout!" said the tramp luxuriously.

SUPPER was ready about the time the yellow moon began to swing up over the horizon. Mike the Pig ate with a will and a sharp stick. He pronounced the meal a "set-down," a phrase meaning "banquet" in Hoboes. But when Bung also sharpened a stick and attempted to attack the feast, Mike shoved him to one side with no pretense of gentleness.

"Hired help don't eat wit' de boss," he explained, as he dangled a tempting morsel of white meat. Despite his prejudice against eating stolen food, Bung was ravenous for a share and plotted murder against this insulting glutton.

Finally Mike the Pig finished with a deep sigh and handed the can over to Bung, who, after much exploration and fishing in the gravy, was at last able to spear a portion of a carrot and the neck of the late Plymouth Rock.

Meanwhile, Mike the Pig stretched himself full length in the sand and waxed reminiscent. Now, in one important particular tramps and some physicians are alike. Both love to beguile their leisure by boasting of their operations on the human race. The hobo's skill is less costly to the patient, perhaps; but it is also much less likely to bestow a benefit. A hobo's fees are small; but he always gets more than he deserves.

Mike the Pig, replete with slumgullion, grew eloquent in praise of his own misdeeds. According to his confession, he was a sort of peanut desperado, a chicken-coop burglar, a swindler without ingenuity, a criminal without courage. Nothing seemed too mean to claim his professional attentions. He had robbed roosts along the valley until his palate tired of the taste of chicken. Disregarding Bung's evident unwillingness to listen, he talked on and on, an idle man with an idle tale to tell. He told of many raids upon unprotected clothes lines; of how at midnight he had lifted cans of milk from convenient dairy yards; how he had poisoned a watchdog here and there and set fire to an occasional haystack as a rebuke to inhabitants who had failed to "come over with the hand-outs." He related with great comedy effect how once, on a lonesome road, he had encountered a drunken deaf-mute and robbed the silent inebriate of a nickel watch and eighty-five cents' small change.

"Y' oughter hit the road wit' me," said Mike enthusiastically. "It's a great life!"

"You velly smart man," agreed Bung with apparent innocence. "Some day, mebbe, you be Plesident Unity States."

"Huh!" snorted Mike. "I wouldn't be President! I'd rather be what I am. A hobo is a free guy. He ain't mixed up in grafts and deals the way them politicians is."

"Yep. You velly fine man. Steal um milk can, steal um chickee—you no call that glaft, mebbe?"

"Nixy, Chino! Dat ain't graft. Bein' a hobo, I know me rights. The world owes me a livin': when I lift a milk can here and dere, I'm only drawin' me salary."

Mike, in his complicated vocabulary, went on to explain how he had beaten his way fifteen hundred miles since winter, had broken his leg falling from a brakebeam, and had walked like a book agent on begging expeditions.

"Dodgee work keep man velly busy," observed Bung.

"It's a matter o' principle wit' me," said the hobo. "I ain't goin' to help none o' them capitalists by woikin' for 'em. Nixy me! Look de way dey travel round in golden gas buggies, grindin' de laborin' man down into the dust!"

"He glind plenty dust on you!" said the appreciative listener.

NIGHT closed down, and Bung could see the lights of the Oliver house glimmering through the trees. The place looked so inviting, and so far away! Homesickness came on him again, and with it a desire to escape from this unwashed ogre, Mike the Pig. He longed to sneak back quietly and sleep in his humble bunk which had supported his dreams so well these many years. Bung scrambled to his feet.

"I go now," he said.

"Where?" said Mike, rising before him. He seemed prodigiously tall, eleven or twelve feet high, silhouetted in the firelight.

"Santa Clara, San José, San Francisco," replied Bung mechanically.

"Aw, no y' don't!" growled the tramp,